**The Renaissance offers us a rich world for exploration, and Shakespeare’s plays were written for these Elizabethan audiences. In order to fully appreciate his plays, we need to understand both him as a writer and the influence of this Elizabethan world on the plays themselves. To that end, I am asking you to work with a partner or as a group of three to discover information on one of the following topics. (25 points)**

DIRECTIONS: Working with one or two others to complete this assignment, you will be responsible for researching one aspect of the Renaissance and reporting back to the class periodically throughout our study of Hamlet, starting this Thursday.

1.) You and your group must select (sign up with teacher) a topic. Topics will be assigned on a first come-first serve basis.

2.) You will research the topic completely. You will be graded, in large part, on how thoroughly you conduct your research and what information you can provide for the class.

3.) You will create a brief visual presentation (several ppt slides,prexi, film clip, etc) of no more than 5-10 minutes. This should be informative and interesting.

4.) You must present your findings to the class. You will be assessed on how thoroughly you cover your topic and how clearly you impart the information. All group members must contribute**. Plan to spend NO MORE THAN 5-10 minutes in front of the class**. Anticipate questions from the both the class and teacher.

You may choose from the following topics.

* The origin of the term “Renaissance” and an overview of traits of the era
* William Shakespeare (playwright and actor)
* Queen Elizabeth I (an overview of her life, characteristics, details of her reign)
* The historical Hamlet (sources for Shakespeare’s play)
* Elizabethan revenge tragedy
* Religious and Political contexts during the Renaissance
* Denmark (during late Medieval and Renaissance times (our play is set there)
* Shakespearean authorship problem
* Clothing/Hairstyles
* Various Elizabethan Beliefs/ Cosmology / Melancholy/The Humors/ Superstitions (ghosts, etc.)
* Royalty and nobility – how they ranked/ Universal Hierarchy—England and Denmark
* Wordplay in Shakespeare (puns, insults, etc) and important words and sayings still with us from Shakespeare’s language.

**The schedule allows you two days in the lab to research and one day in class to plan. Presentations begin Thursday. Use your time wisely!!**